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Establishment of an international criminal court

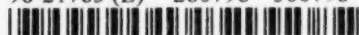
**Letter dated 22 July 1998 from the Permanent Representative of
Austria to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General**

I have the honour to draw your attention to the statement by the President of the European Union on the International Criminal Court issued on 22 July 1998.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly under item 155 of the provisional agenda.

(Signed) Ernst Sucharipa
Permanent Representative
of Austria to the United Nations

* A/53/150.



Annex

[Original: English and French]

Statement by the President of the European Union on the International Criminal Court

The European Union expresses its deep appreciation for the successful completion of the United Nations Diplomatic Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Establishment of an International Criminal Court, which is an achievement of historical dimensions sending a signal that the world can be made a safer and more just place to live in.

The European Union fully endorses the outcome of the Rome Conference as reflected in the statute adopted by an overwhelming majority of participating States on 17 July 1998. Although not all aspirations could be fully accommodated, this statute lays the foundation for an effective and credible Court as an institution to fight impunity of the most heinous crimes and to deter their commission. The European Union is pleased that complicated and difficult issues such as the definition of crimes, the principle of complementarity, the scope of jurisdiction, the independence of the prosecutor, and the relationship with the United Nations were resolved in a satisfactory manner acceptable to all States members of the European Union.

The European Union is well aware that not all tasks to make the Court a reality have been accomplished yet. In particular, the Preparatory Commission has still to carry out its work as set out in the statute, such as the elaboration of the rules of procedure and evidence. The European Union stands ready to do its utmost to contribute to the accomplishment of this task. The European Union expresses the hope that the required number of 60 ratifications will be reached soon in order for the Court to become operative.

The European Union expresses its particular gratitude to Philippe Kirsch for his outstanding contribution to the success of the Rome Conference and would also like to thank the host country, Italy, for its generous hospitality and for paving the way for the positive outcome of the Conference.
